

Effective Communication at Work: Achieving Results and Enhancing Relationships

A good example of a bad example

People have memories—and mouths

- **When happy/satisfied with their interactions with you**
 1. Loyal—they return
 2. Tell 2-3 people about their positive experiences
 3. Recommend you
- **When unhappy/dissatisfied with you**
 1. Don't return, unless they have too; return disgruntled with negative expectations
 2. Tell 8-10 people about their negative experiences
 3. Advise others to avoid you

3 Stages of every interaction

1	Greeting
2	Transaction
3	Parting

4 Things People Want from YOU in every interaction

1	Attention
2	Acceptance—at three levels
3	Assertion
4	Appreciation

1. Attention

The SOLER Model

S = Face the other person **SQUARELY**

O = Adopt an **OPEN** posture

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L = **LEAN** forward slightly
E = Maintain **EYE CONTACT**
R = **RELAX**

Gender and cultural adaptations Verbal Following (Understanding)

Mary was a sensible and giddy young lady, wise and silly beyond compare. She was a slight and small creature, yet so large that everyone who knew her loved her. She felt rather lonely, because she lived in a town with no other houses or people for miles around.

Multi-channel Nonverbal Following

The percent of impact in face-to-face communication:

Verbal = _____%

Facial = _____%

Vocal = _____%

Nonverbal Channels

Posture, posture shifts	Body movement	Body orientation
Interpersonal distance	Gestures	Facial displays
Eye/looking behaviors	Voice (vocalics)	Dress
Physical appearance	Touch (tactile)	Object communication
Odor (olfactory)	Breathing patterns	BMIRS: behavioral manifestations of internal states

Back-channeling

Supportive responses that communicate attention and a desire for the other to continue talking include:

- Vocalizations
- Head nodding
- Gestures
- Facial expressions
- Eye contact
- Questions

2. Acceptance Skills

A. Affirm the Nature of the Relationship

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Hierarchical indicators	<u>Who's up</u> and <u>who's down</u> in the social order?
Immediacy indicators	<u>How close</u> or <u>how far</u> are we in inter-subjective distance?
Basic respect	"Seeing" (Latin) another
Earned respect	High opinion, esteem, admiration

Gender and cultural considerations

B. Develop and Maintain Rapport

- **Posture echo:** Matching, mirroring, Cross-over mirroring
- **Vocal echo:** Resonance and reverberation
- **Interaction synchrony:** The rhythms of conversation

C. Respond Verbally to Accept Messages

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Paraphrase ideas <i>Check the accuracy of your interpretation of the other's message</i>	Reflect the explicit ideas you think another has expressed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a shorter, simpler version • Offer an example • State underlying theme you perceive
Paraphrase feelings <i>Check the accuracy of your interpretation of the other's feelings</i>	Reflect the feelings and emotions you think another has expressed or implied <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the emotion(s) being expressed • Share what you observe about the other's physical behavior, energy level • Notice congruence/incongruence between verbal content and feelings
Express empathy <i>Experience the other person's world, without judgment</i>	Let the other know that you are aware of his/her needs and concerns and understand his/her perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect, "If I were in your shoes..." • Looking at this through your eyes...
Prompt and Probe <i>Encourage the other to clarify, elaborate, consider alternatives</i>	Ask open-ended questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me more • Could you elaborate? Give an example? • Have you considered?
Summarize <i>Recap the essence of the encounter; review agreements</i>	Sum up what the other has communicated, explicitly and implicitly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reiterate the other's explicit concerns • State what you believe to be essential understandings and agreements

Defensiveness: The NUMBER ONE problem in communication at work

Defensiveness arises when we feel:

- Threatened
- Attacked
- Punished
- Unjustly accused

When we become defensive, we experience:

- Emotionally agitated
- Estranged
- Confused
- Aggressive or passive impulses

When defensive, our goals are to:

- Defend and protect our self concept and self esteem
- Defend and protect our relational image

To defend ourselves, we may become:

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Aggressive	Passive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argue • Attack • Counter-attack • Express anger • Self-aggrandize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationalize, explain, justify • Become fearful or sad • Give in • Lose motivation • Withdraw

4. Supportive Communication

Orient to problems—Not to people	Focus on issues, problems and processes that can be changed
Be congruent—Not incongruent	Communicate authentically so that verbal and nonverbal communication match your thoughts and feelings
Be descriptive—not evaluative	Focus on a neutral description of objective information, along with a description of your reaction, and perhaps an alternative suggestion
Validate—Don't invalidate	Communicate respect, flexibility, areas of agreement, and collaborative intent
Be specific—Not global	Focus on specific behaviors or events
Be conjunctive—Not disjunctive	Keep continuity flowing and relate to what the previous person has said—don't change the subject
Own—Don't disown	Take responsibility for your statements, actions, feelings, wants, needs
Make it two-way—not one-way	Actively listen to gather information, with deliberate attention to reflection

Results of Supportive Communication

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- People feel listened to, accepted and validated through active involvement→
- Their self-esteem and confidence are boosted→
- Their commitment and loyalty increases →
- Your relationships stays intact or grows →
- This all paves the way for future interactions that are constructive, positive and beneficial

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Tool 1: The Clear Message Format

Uses

1. To state a complaint or problem
2. To request a change of behavior, policy, or procedure
3. To express your hopes, wishes, desires

Elements of the Clear Message Format

Describe <i>the behavior or situation</i>	<i>Be concrete, objective and specific</i>
Interpret <i>the meaning you attach</i>	<i>What is the problem with the behavior or situation?</i> <i>Remember: Our interpretations may be based on past experiences, assumptions, expectations, knowledge, mood</i>
Express (Own) <i>Your feelings and emotions</i>	<i>Name the feeling(s)</i> <i>Be accurate about the intensity</i>
Consequences	<i>Explain what happens as a result of the behavior or situation you have described</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What happens too you</i> 2. <i>What happens to the persona you're addressing</i> 3. <i>What happens to others</i> <i>Simply describe—no moralizing or threatening</i>
Intentions	<i>State any intentions that may apply:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Where you stand</i> 2. <i>What you request of the other</i> 3. <i>How you plan to react in the future</i>

Always follow up with active listening

Use the Clear Message Format to elicit complete messages from others

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Tool 2: Responding to feedback that is ON TARGET

Uses: To respond *non-defensively* to feedback that is accurate (ouch!)

Elements of Responding to feedback that is ON TARGET:

Listen actively <i>to what the other is saying</i>	<i>Be sure you understand his/her perspective—you need not agree!</i>
Acknowledge <i>your error or your fault</i>	<i>Admitting your shortcoming can stop the other's attack</i>
Seek <i>more information</i>	<i>To fully understand what your critic is telling you, ask for specifics. If he/she cannot/ will not be specific: paraphrase, guess, or ask about consequences.</i>
Create <i>a plan for positive action</i>	<i>Follow up on the plan and keep the other informed</i>
Appreciate <i>the other for talking with you</i>	<i>This paves the way for your next interaction to be positive and beneficial</i>

Follow with active listening

The art of apology

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Tool 3: Responding to Feedback that is OFF TARGET

Use: To respond *non-defensively* to feedback that is inaccurate or untrue

Tools (Skills) to Use:

Listen actively	<i>Be sure you understand his/her perspective</i>
Fog the criticism	<i>Accept the other's perception</i> <i>Agree with the possible truth</i> <i>Follow his/her logic</i> <i>Remove your resistance, avert your own aggressive impulses and avoid an argument or fight</i>
Assert	<i>Your interpretation</i> <i>Your intentions</i> <i>Respect differences between yourself and others, allowing them their perceptions, beliefs, reactions...without needing to agree with them</i>
Credit <i>the other person</i>	<i>Pave the way for your next interaction to be positive and beneficial</i>

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4. Appreciation Skills

Thank	Praise	Reward
<i>Compliment</i>	Commend	Approve
Recognize	value	Notice
STICK UP FOR	<i>Refer</i>	Recommend

Responses to Appreciation

Disconfirm & reject	Accept & thank
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